

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-10 PM-07 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-03 MC-02 EUR-25 ACDA-19 EA-11 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7332

INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 2432

FROM NEWSOM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ET, SO, US

SUBJ: ETHIOPIAN SECURITY

1. IN TWO HOURS WITH PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER AND FIVE ADDITIONAL HOURS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER NOV. 9 I WAS TREATED TO FULL EXPOSITION ETHIOPIAN ALARM OVER SOVEIT ARMS BUILDUP IN SOMALIA. THIS ALARM POSES REAL PROBLEMS FOR US.

2. AKRM IS RESULT OF SEVERAL FACTORS: UNSHAKABLE ETHIOPIAN CONVICTION IN THEIR ASSESSMENT OF MAGNITUDE OF SOMALI BUILDUP AND SOMALI AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS; CONVICTION THAT WEAKNESS IN ETHIOPIAN FORCES IS NO DETERRENT TO SOMALI EXPANSION; LACK OF RELIEF FROM EMPEROR'S LATEST MOSCOW VISIT; UNEXPECTED US DEPARTURE FROM KAGNEW; DISAPPOINTMENT WITH US RESPONSE ON DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS; AND DISCOVERY OF OIL AND GAS IN OGADEN WHICH MAKES AREA MORE ATTRACTIVE AS A PRIZE. CONVERSATION MADE CLEAR THAT BASIC CONCERN IS THAT LOSS OF ANY SIGNIFICANT TERRITORY OR CITY COULD HAVE DISINTEGRATIVE EFFECT ON

INTERNAL ETHIOPIAN STRUCTURE POSING SERIOUS THREATS TO REGIME. EVEN IF OAU AND UN INTERVENE, IF SOMALI

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SEIZES TERRITORY, ETHIOPIANS BELIEVE THIS SIGN OF WEAKNESS

COULD CAUSE INTERNAL DISTURBANCES.

3. EXPOSITION WAS SPARKED IN PART BY MY PRESENTATION OF CLEAR LIMITATIONS OF US MILITARY AID AND SUGGESTION THAT ETHIOPIA FREE TO SEEK ALTERNATIVE SOURCES TO SUPPLEMENT WHAT WE DO. IEG CLEARLY FEELS ONLY REALISTIC ALTERNATIVES ARE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA AND BOTH OF THESE RAISE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR THEM AND FOR US. WESTERN EUROPEAN SOURCES RULED OUT BECAUSE OF COSTS (FRANCE) AND DISINTEREST IN STRATEGIC CHARACTER OF AREA (U.K.) ETHIOPIA SEES LITTLE HOPE FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM ARAB STATES.

4. WE CAN CHALLENGE ETHIOPIA'S ASSUMPTIONS BOTH REGARDING SOMALIA'S INTENTIONS AND ETHIOPIAN MILITARY WEAKNESS. OUR ASSESSMENTS DIFFER ON BOTH. WE CAN PRESS THEM TO TAKE GREATER ADVANTAGE OF THEIR INCREASING CURRENT RESOURCES TO SUPPLEMENT MAP AND CAN TRY TO ENCOURAGE MORE REALISTIC LOOK AT WHAT THEY NEED. WE CAN TRY TO COAX THEM TO COOPERATE IN THE OAU COMMITTEE TO FIND SOLUTION. ETHIOPIANS REJECT THESE APPROACHES.

5. CONVERSATIONS MADE CLEAR THAT NEITHER EMPEROR, PRIME MINISTER NOR FOREIGN MINISTER GENUINELY BELIEVE US UNABLE TO DO MORE THAN CURRENT PROPOSALS ON MAP AND FMS. FOREIGN MIN SAID "WE ARE NOT ASKING MUCH--ONLY EQUIPMENT WORTH PERHAPS \$100 MILLION. THIS SHOULD BE EASY FOR US IF IT UNDERSTOOD OUR PROBLEM." THEY APPEAR CONVINCED ETHIOPIA IS VICTIM OF NIXON DOCTRINE WHOSE IMPORT THEY SIMPLY DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

6. WE FACE PROBLEM THEREFORE THAT ETHIOPIA CONVINCED IT HAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO RAPID INCREASE IN MILITARY STRENGTH AND MUST HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE HARDWARE. NO REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF CONGRESSIONAL OPINION SUGGESTS WE CAN SUPPLY IT. MUCH OF WHAT WE HAVE GIVEN THEM WILL BE GROWING OBSOLETE IN NEXT FIVE YEARS AND PRESSURE WILL GROW. THERE ARE QUESTIONS OF EXTENT OUR STRATEGIC REQUIREMENTS AND FUTURE INTERESTS AS WELL AS DEGREE TO WHICH WE SHOULD PUT MAJOR US RESOURCES INTO VULNERABLE REGIME RULED BY AGING EMPEROR. ON OTHER HAND LOSS OF ETHIOPIAN TO RADICAL
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INFLUENCE COULD AFFECT OUR TOTAL POSITION IN RED SEA AREA AND BE ONE MORE CASE OF AMERICAN-BACKED COUNTRY APPEARING TO LOSE OUT TO SOVIET-BACKED COUNTRY.

7. I SEE THESE ALTERNATIVES:

A. EXPEDITE TO UTMOST DELIVERY OF PREVIOUSLY PROGRAMMED AND FUNDED EQUIPMENT WHILE SEEKING MAKE MAXIMUM USE OF

PRESENT AVAILABLE FUNDS INCLUDING SIDEWINDERS TO IMPROVE ETHIOPIAN DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY. IT IS DOUBTFUL THIS WOULD HOLD ETHIOPIA IN LINE FOR ANY EXTENDED PERIOD. ANY SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN SOPHISTICATION OR QUANTITY COULD RISK ESCALATION OF SOVIET DELIVERIES TO SOMALI. THIS IS A RISK WE MAY HAVE TO RUN.

B. ENCOURAGE ETHIOPIAN TO SPEND MORE OF ITS OWN RESOURCES ON US EQUIPMENT. THIS THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY RELUCTANT TO DO, BUT COULD DO IF PRESSED.

C. MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT TO FIND U.S. FUNDS THAT WOULD OVER TWO-YEAR PERIOD COVER HIGH PRIORITY MILITARY REQUIREMENT LISTS ESTIMATED AT \$29 MILLION.

D. ASK CONGRESS FOR SPECIAL APPROPRIATION TO ROUND OUT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ETHIOPIA. THIS OBVIOUSLY VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE CONGRESSIONALLY, PARTICULARLY AFTER DEPARTURE FROM KAGNEW.

E. MAKE CLEAR THAT WHILE WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT MAINTAIN GRANT PROGRAM FOR MAINTENANCE AND TRAINING, WE CAN NO LONGER SUPPLY EQUIPMENT ON GRANT BASIS. THIS WOULD MUST CERTAINLY LEAD ETHIOPIA ELSEWHERE.

F. INDICATE CLEARLY WE DO NOT SEE PROBLEM IN MILITARY AND URGE EFFORT TO FIND MEANS OF LESSENING TENSION, POSSIBLE THROUGH TROOP SEPARATION AND/OR ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

8. TO ACQUAINT ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WITH CONGRESSIONAL CONCERNS AND POSSIBLY TO ASSIST US IN CONTINUING TO GET MAP FOR ETHIOPIA, I HAVE SUGGESTED HE COME TO WASHINGTON WHILE CONGRESS IN SESSION AT WHICH TIME WE WOULD SEEK ARRANGE
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VISIT FOR HIM TO KEY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. HE HAS SAID HE WILL COME AND WISHES US SUGGEST DATES.

9. I WILL WISH DISCUSS WHOLE ISSUE ON MY RETURN.
BREWER

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